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ABSTRACT

With special attention to meeting the needs of migrant students who are characterized by high mobility and a high dropout rate, this digest presents an overview of career education counseling and provides guidance to assist teachers, counselors, and administrators in incorporating such counseling into their curricula. The three major career education counseling elements of career exposure, work preparation, and basic skills development are described. The three strands of career exposure are discussed: self-awareness activities, providing job and role information, and decision-making/goal-attaining activities. Through written information, interview, and job site involvement, work preparation is described as providing students with practical experience and job option awareness. Several programs which provide basic skills to youth who have left school prior to graduation (e.g., Adult Basic Education and General Equivalency Diploma) are reviewed. Grades at which the different elements should be implemented and how career education counseling is different for migrant youth are described. Discussions regarding community involvement, counselor responsibility, the incorporation of counseling elements into different curricula and existing programs, and a list of five existing migrant career education counseling programs conclude the document. (PM)

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ERIC DIGEST

MIGRANT EDUCATION

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CAREER EDUCATION COUNSELING FOR MIGRANT STUDENTS

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ERIC DIGEST

MIGRANT EDUCATION

CAREER EDUCATION COUNSELING FOR MIGRANT STUDENTS

The high mobility and concurrently high dropout rate among migrant students have attracted a great deal of attention, and a number of programs have been developed to make the educational process more compatible with lifestyles of migrant students. However, unless students participate in such programs, they have little meaning. This digest presents an overview of career education counseling and provides guidance to assist teachers, counselors, and administrators in incorporating it into their curricula, with special attention to meeting the needs of migrant students.

What Is Career Education Counseling?

Although special consideration must be given to the factors of high mobility and dropout rate that characterize the migrant student population, career education itself is essentially the same for all students. The projects appropriate for migrant students will serve equally well for all students, and many projects can be adapted to serve migrant students. The guiding principle for all should be to prepare students for life in the working world. To this end, career education counseling incorporates three major elements: career exposure, work preparation, and basic skill development. An examination of each element shows how the emphasis is, and must be, on individualizing the broad concepts to meet very personal needs, abilities, and goals.

What Is Career Exposure?

Career exposure seeks to promote self-awareness, to provide job and role information, and to teach decision-making/goal-attaining skills. These are the three strands of career education.

Self-awareness activities consider the values, talents, and desires of the student. It includes close self-examination of one's own physical, emotional, and mental being. Since the self is not unchangeable, each individual must come to an understanding of his/her own needs and desires in relation to the needs and desires of others. The most effective career decisions will be based on knowledge of special talents and/or limitations. All youth should understand that each person is an individual with unique abilities and unique opportunities to share those abilities. Self-awareness can be encouraged not only in specific self-awareness sessions in a formal career education program but also in learning experiences in all areas of school life.

Job and role information is an important part of career development. It may include the skills and tasks, the tools and equipment, the training and formal education, and the placement and advancement opportunities for various occupations. Specific occupations and levels of entry of the 15 occupational clusters defined by the U.S. Department of Labor should be presented. Job and role awareness ensures students will make occupational choices based on true and complete rather than on false or inadequate information.

Decision-making/goal-attaining activities provide a structure for reaching goals by making decisions and following through with sequential activities which ultimately lead to goal attainment. Thus, students are guided through processes in which they formulate their goals in tangible terms; investigate and consider available resources (such as reading, other people, and personal experience); consider all options and their probable outcomes; make a decision; plan, act, and/or review their progress (and possible change or modify the original goal); and ultimately reach their goals.

What Is Work Preparation?

For the most part, migrant youth know one type of work—migrant agricultural labor. They must be made aware that there are options. Therefore, all students should be provided not only with written information but also with direct experience in a variety of occupations through interview, shadowing, and work experience programs. The interview consists of the student's first reading about an occupation and then actually talking to professionals in that occupation. Shadowing provides the student with the opportunity to follow a professional in his work activities for several days. The work experience component allows the student to spend a number of weeks or months working alongside a professional and to be paid for the time involved and the work performed. Thus, the student can participate in a new work experience while building basic skills and discussing career issues with a counselor or teacher. In addition, such a setting provides practice in employment interviewing, resume writing, and other work preparation activities.

What Is Basic Skill Development?

For youth who have left school prior to graduation, as do many migrant students, career education counseling must be accompanied by programs which provide training in basic literacy, English as a second language (when necessary), and content area studies. Following is a brief description of some existing programs.

1. Adult Basic Education (ABE) is for those who have left school and need basic literacy, second-language training, and/or basic mathematical skills.

2. General Equivalency Diploma (GED) programs are for those who have the basic skills but lack a high school diploma. It is well known that a high school diploma makes an appreciable difference in lifetime earning capabilities.

3. Giving Rural Adults a Study Program (GRASP) is a method by which adults who cannot participate in a traditional daytime schedule of studies may still be able to participate in an ABE or GED program. GRASP programs may use the rural library or the post office system to deliver units of study which the student completes at home. Friends or neighbors may be used as tutors so that one student is able to guide others as they all have the opportunity to grow. For further information on how a typical GRASP program functions, contact Andrea May at the New Paltz Migrant Tutorial Outreach Program, P.O. Box 2509, New Paltz, New York, 12561.

4. Portable Assisted Study Sequence (PASS) programs began in California as an option for the migrant student who did not wish to leave school but who encountered severe difficulties in completing course credits due to frequent moves. PASS provides units which may be completed independently or with the help of a tutor. The unit exams, when completed, are sent to the base school for scoring. Upon successful completion of a given course of study, high school credit is issued by the PASS sponsoring school. For further information on how a typical PASS program functions contact the Coordinator, PASS Program, Fresno County Department of Education, 2314 Mariposa Street, Fresno, California 93721.

When Should Career Education Counseling Begin?

Programs can begin as early as kindergarten and include the three strands of career education. The earlier any student, migrant or otherwise, is presented with a variety of information and skill development opportunities the more likely he or she is to internalize these facts and skills and put them to practical use. Therefore, programs which promote self-awareness provide job and role information, and encourage the development of decision-making skills beginning as early as kindergarten prove beneficial. As the students progress through high school, interviewing, shadowing, and work experience programs can be added. Often these activities serve to demonstrate the usefulness of remaining in high school to prepare for productive roles in the world of work. As long as the migrant dropout rate remains high, the in-school career education program must be supplemented with adult and out-of-school programs.

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How Is Career Education Counseling Different For Migrant Youth?

Because of continuing mobility, migrant youth often do not participate in such community activities as scouting, church, and city-sponsored youth groups. Therefore, the advantage provided by such groups should be included in a migrant career education counseling program. Also, both ABE and GED programs must be made available in non-traditional and creative manners to accommodate the transient lifestyle of migrant youth. Career education must be approached through short units which can be completed in limited periods of time. Migrant educators must be aware of the various programs and approaches to career education throughout the country which provide a variety of approaches to complement the styles of teachers, counselors and students. The alternative programs described above and others have been developed to the effects of the high dropout rate among migrant, as well as other students.

Who Is Responsible For Migrant Career Education Counseling And Who Pays?

Those tutors or teachers who are most often in contact with the migrant in-school youth must be prepared to support such students with career information and guidance. Much of this information can be incorporated into language arts and content area studies. However, when and where it is economically feasible, the teacher, tutor, and/or student can benefit from the support of a trained career education counselor. This person should be responsible for reviewing currently available programs and training the teacher and tutor to work with the student as well as for working directly with students. Counseling of secondary school students as well as those no longer in school is an important part of the counselor's role.

Community support is essential to a successful career education program. Community professionals and workers can help by speaking to groups of students. They can also bring reality to career education by participating directly in interviewing, shadowing and work experience projects. This community support has the side effect of greater community understanding of the unique qualities and attributes of migrant youth and migrant families. Of course, migrant families also need to be involved in career education programs and can often participate through the Parent Advisory Council (PAC). It is essential that the family understand what the career education program is attempting to do.

It must be realized that in the long run we all pay for the lack of career education, whether for migrant students or others. Youth prepared for entry into the post-school world of work are less likely to need public assistance and support.

Where And How Can Components of Migrant Career Education Counseling Best Be Covered In Existing Programs?

Career education counseling can be approached as a separate component with time set aside on a daily or weekly basis. The program may be conducted by a teacher, a tutor, and/or a career education counselor. Alternatively or concurrently career education counseling can be infused into the existing language arts and content area programs. Since interviewing, shadowing, and work experience should be reported in writing, these areas fit well into a writing curriculum as do interview preparation, resume writing and other aspects of career education. In some ways, infusion may be superior to the separate component approach because it illustrates real-life, practical applications for the school curriculum content.

Are There Some Programs Already Developed to Meet the Special Career Education Needs of Migrant Students?

Following is a list of some current migrant career education programs and contact persons, as appropriate.

1. CHOICE (Challenging Options in Career Education)
   Margaret Taylor, Project Director
   P.O. Box 250
   New Paltz, NY 12561

2. MAP (Migrant Awareness Program)
   Shirley Holder
   305 W. Hanson Street
   Hammond, LA 70401

3. MAP-S (Model Appraisal Process-Secondary)
   Ms. Darlene M. Mincy, Program Specialist
   Migrant Education Program
   Division of Compensatory/Bilingual Education
   New Jersey State Department of Education, CN 500
   Trenton, NJ 08625

4. Minnesota Career Education Materials
   Diana Mathews, Specialist (Secondary and Career Education)
   Minnesota Department of Education
   Capitol Square
   550 Cedar Street
   Saint Paul, MN 55101

5. High School Equivalency Program
   Joseph Bertoglio
   Compensatory Education Programs
   Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
   U.S. Department of Education
   400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
   Washington, DC 20202

By considering the special circumstances and characteristics of migrant youth, concerned educators, counselors, and administrators can formulate new career education programs or modify existing ones to enable migrant students to continue the educational process to the attainment of personally satisfying and financially rewarding careers.

Additional Resource Materials:

Flores, Merced. *A Resource Guide on Social Science Careers*. Salem, OR: Oregon Migrant Education Service Center, July 1980. ED 197 867.

Hamar, Rosalind, and Andrea Hunter. *Choices for Migrant Youth: Ideas for Action in Education and Work*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, September 1983. ED 239 801.

Kissam, Edward, and Penelope L. Richardson. *Y.E.S., Inc. Guidebook: A Youth Employment Skills Media and Outreach Project*. Los Angeles, CA: KCET-TV, 1983. ED 240 479.

New York State Education Department, Bureau of Pupil Services. *Ideas that Work: A Compendium of Guidance Program Practices K-12*. Albany, NY: State Department of Education, 1984. ED 247 512.

Orum, Lori S. *Career Information and Hispanic High School Students*. Washington, D.C.: National Council of La Raza, September 1982. ED 238 650.

Pendergrass, John, Nancy Carter and Marcia Douglas. *Idea Book: Meeting the Occupational Information Needs of Disadvantaged Youth*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1981. ED 237 595.

Worthington, Robert M. *The Future Role of Vocational Guidance: A National Perspective*. Washington, DC: Office of Vocational and Adult Education, Department of Education, September 1983. ED 240 315.

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